

It has been a pleasure and an honor to serve as a Commissioner for San Joaquin County Children and Families Commission, and I am now proud to serve as it Chairperson.

It has always been the Commission's goal to work with the community, to support children at the most critical time in their development—prenatal to age 5. The time, effort, and funding we invest today will have a profound impact on children throughout their lives.

The vision of the Commission is that all San Joaquin County children will thrive in supportive, nurturing and loving environments, enter school healthy and ready to learn, and become productive, well adjusted members of society. Since the Commission was formed in 1999, a tremendous amount of work has been done in our communities to increased parental skills and knowledge, expand the supply of quality childcare in high need areas, improve children's health, and increase services for families while improving the delivery of those services.

To date, we have expended over \$8,700,000 throughout the county. Through the active partnership of public and private organizations, thousands of children and families are being served. I am in admiration of the extraordinary dedication of our contractors' who work so hard to support our efforts. This relationship between contractors, their commitment to one another, teamwork, and willingness to empower are key factors to the successes Commissioners see every day. However, it is because of this commitment of the contractors, the First 5 Staff and the Commission that we are constantly challenging ourselves to do better. In today's highly complex and specialized world, no one, no program, no organization can be self-sufficient or as effective working alone. We are unavoidably interdependent and must to develop relationships that allow providers to integrate their services to benefit families; that reduce confusion and frustration and allow service users to get what they need when they need it.

We have been offered an opportunity to support an effort on a scale that has not been seen before, a unique chance to make an investment in our county's children and our future. Together we can ensure that each of the nearly 10,000 babies born each year in our county are welcomed and given the best possible start in life. We can give families and caregivers the support they need to create environments that nurture all children and prepare them to succeed.

Sincerely,